



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**EVENT: Guilty Plea**

**Defendant: Bethann Shauntee**

**FORMER SOCIAL SECURITY EMPLOYEE SENTENCED**

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Bethann Shauntee, 40, of Detroit and former employee of the Social Security Administration, was sentenced by United States District Judge Bernard A. Friedman to 12 months in prison after pleading guilty to one count of defrauding the Social Security Administration of over \$21,000 and one count of Misuse of a Social Security number, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by William J. Cotter, Special Agent In Charge of the Chicago Field Division of the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General.

The fraud occurred over a 16 month period between November 2004 and February 2006. During that time Shauntee worked as a Claims Representative for the Social Security Administration. Shauntee committed the fraud by accessing the Social Security Administration computer database to divert the Supplement Security Income (SSI) checks of disabled adults to her co-defendant, Walter Johnson. Shauntee also accessed the Social Security Administration computer database after Johnson cashed the SSI checks to falsely report that the checks had not been received,

which caused additional checks to be issued to Johnson. While on bond in this case, Shauntee used a false Social Security number to open a credit union account.

As part of her sentence Shauntee must repay the amount obtained by fraud, namely, \$21,418.20. Shauntee was terminated by the Social Security Administration. Johnson was sentenced on November 22, 2006 to serve 67 months in prison after a pleading guilty to one count of being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm.

United States Attorney Murphy said: "The theft of federal funds intended for the poor and disabled is an egregious offense. It is made even more so when the theft is committed by a federal employee. Such breaches of trust will be met with the full force of available federal criminal statutes."

The investigation of this case was conducted by the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General and the U.S. Secret Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Pamela Thompson.